

# Which farms will be counted as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)?

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## When is a farm a CAFO and required to get a DNR permit?

Any livestock or poultry operation with 1,000 or more animal units is a concentrated animal feeding operation under current regulations. CAFOs are required to apply for and operate under a DNR-issued water quality protection permit. Proposed changes to the state's rule, NR 243, would keep the same 1,000 animal threshold but modify the way it's calculated. Currently, of the 30,000 livestock operations in Wisconsin, about 150 are CAFOs, and that number is not expected to change greatly as a result of the proposed modification.

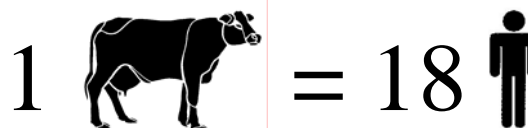
## What are animal units?

Animal units are not the same thing as the number of animals on a farm. A conversion factor is used for each different animal type (beef, dairy, swine) and size (mature or immature) to determine how many equal 1,000 animal units. For instance, 1,000 animal units equals about 700 mature dairy cows, 2,500 pigs, or 55,000 turkeys. For farms having more than one animal type or size class, as most Wisconsin farms have, the state combines all animals together to determine total animal units at an operation. Revised federal regulations do not combine different animal types and sizes together. Rather, each individual animal type or size is counted separately toward its own 1,000 animal unit threshold.

## Only farms with the most manure affected

While the vast majority of Wisconsin's 30,000 livestock farms are generally very small – the average dairy herd size is around 70 cows – the number of very large farms is growing.

Proper manure management is important for all farms, but is particularly critical given the amount of manure these large farms generate. Since one cow produces as much waste as 18 people, a single CAFO has as much pollution potential from untreated waste as the cities of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin Rapids, Onalaska or Ashwaubenon. These large CAFOs are regulated by state and federal laws to ensure sound manure management.



## How are animal units changing, why, and to what effect?

The proposed change to state regulations would modify some of the conversion factors used to calculate how many animals equal 1,000 animal units. The change was spurred by a recent change in federal rules that DNR must incorporate into state rules. After listening to a variety of perspectives on this issue during public hearings, the DNR is proposing to combine Wisconsin's traditional approach with the new federal requirements. This approach requires a farmer to calculate animal units using both a) the current DNR approach which combines all animals toward the same 1,000 threshold using existing conversion factors, and b) the revised federal approach with new conversion factors for individual animal types or sizes. If either calculation equals or exceeds 1,000 animal units, the farmer would apply for a permit. This modification preserves Wisconsin's practice of counting all animals toward a single threshold to appropriately protect public health, lakes, and rivers but meets federal requirements.

## Current CAFO Permit Statistics (April 7, 2005)

146 Currently Permitted Operations Statewide  
5 Applications Pending

### CAFOs of each animal type

Animal Type	Currently Permitted	Applications Pending
Dairy	125	4
Poultry	11	0
Hogs	7	0
Beef	3	1

### CAFOs in each Wisconsin region

Region	Currently Permitted	Applications Pending
Northern	11	1
Northeast	59	2
Southeast	10	0
South Central	28	0
West Central	38	2

## Trends in CAFO Permit Statistics Over Time

### CAFOs with WPDES Permits

